THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. There is an on going scheme on Development and Strengthening of State Agricultural Univerisities under which need based support is provided for strengthening and modernisation of educational programmes in the universities.

(b) Between Rs. 5 to 7.5 crores is being proposed to each university in Tenth plan based upon number of institutions, types and strength of the programmes, intake and out turn of graduates etc.

(c) Yes, Sir, an amount of Rs. 131.30 crores was allocated for development and strengthening of Agricultural Universities during the Ninth plan period.

(d) In order to meet global challenges and make education relevant to the present day context, higher financial support to State Agricultural Universities is needed.

Development of hybrid onion

2788. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Agricultural Research Institute has successfully developed the world's first hybrid onion yield;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the on-farm trials of the new yield have been completed; and

(d) by when commercial cultivation of the crop is expected to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. Indian Agricultural Research Institute has developed its first onion hybrid but it is not first in the world.

(b) The onion hybrid has been developed using male sterile line to reduce the cost of hybrid seed. It gives on an average 25% higher yield over commercial cultivar Pusa Red.

(c) The yield trial at Indian Agricultural Research Institute have been completed and it is being introduced under All India

Coordinated yield trials for multilocation testing before it is released to the farmers for commercial cultivation.

(d) Depending upon the performance of the hybrid under multi-location trials, it would be available for commercial cultivation within 3 to 4 years.

Development of horticulture

2789. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the productivity and availability of horticulture produce increase dramatically over the last decade due to investment made during the Eighth and Ninth Five Year Plans;

(b) if so, whether the experts have felt that much more needs to be done to improve the quantity and competitiveness of the horticultural products;

(c) whether horticulture has shown the best option during the past, for diversification of agriculture, generation of more employment opportunities and higher returns per unit of land; and

(d) if so, whether, in view thereof, any concrete plans are being worked out to develop horticulture in the Tenth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. The production of horticultural produce increased from 96.6 million tonnes in 1991-92 to 149.2 million tonnes in 1999-2000 and the productivity from 7.5 tonnes/ha. to 9.8 tonnes/ha. during the same period.

(b) to (d) Over the years, the horticulture sector has established its importance as an economically viable alternative in the strategy for diversification of Indian Agriculture because of its potential to increase productivity of land, generate higher income per unit of land, provide nutritional security, generate employment, broaden industrial base and improve exports. Accordingly the Government envisages to provide a boost for all-round development of horticulture during the Tenth Five Year Plan. Apart from the